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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 000767

STATE FOR S, C, WHA AND INL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/01/2013

TAGS: PREL SNAR HA

SUBJECT: HAITIAN JUSTICE MINISTER CONCERNED ABOUT DRUGS AND POLICE MATERIEL SUPPORT

REF: PORT-AU-PRINCE 760

Classified By: AMBASSADOR KENNETH MERTEN FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary. The Haitian Justice Minister echoed the President's and PM's pleas for increased U.S. counter-narcotics measures in Haiti as well as increased flow of information back to Haiti gleaned from trials of Haitians in the U.S. He also requested assistance to resolve an acute shortage of ammunition and weapons for the national police. End Summary.

¶2. (C) During an 28 August courtesy call, Minister of Justice Jean-Joseph Exume asked Ambassador Merten for assistance in obtaining weapons and ammunition for the police. He noted that the entire police force is virtually out of ammunition and new recruits are not even given training with guns nor issued a weapon due to the lack of side arms and ammunition. Exume said that this acute shortage greatly undermines the ability of the Haitian police to provide law and order, and that with growing challenges from transnational crime and civil unrest, this lack of lethal capability has a negative impact on governability. MINUSTAH Senior Representative Hedi Annabi told the Ambassador on 31 August that the Government of Colombia has offered to provide Haiti with side arms and ammunition as part of the switch Colombian law enforcement agencies are making from .38 caliber to 9 mm weapons. However, that donation is not certain and is not expected before October at the earliest.

¶3. (C) Exume also asked about the status of U.S. assistance for building a Haitian National Police coast guard base at Port-de-Paix, on Haiti's strategic north coast. We have agreed to help the GOH build a coast guard base in Port-de-Paix, but the GOH has not produced a clear land title for their preferred site, delaying the Embassy's ability to begin program implementation. Construction of a new women's prison, with some USG financing, is also on hold pending delivery by the GOH of court documents showing that the property, that was forfeited in a narcotics case, is now legally the property of the GOH.

¶4. (C) Finally, Exume also echoed the requests from both President Preval and Prime Minister Pierre-Louis that the United States increase its counter-narcotics efforts in Haiti and share more information gleaned from Haitian nationals who are being/have been tried in the U.S. This information, Exume said would help Haitian officials prosecute those criminals "left behind" after the key perpetrators are extradited.

MERTEN